

Message Text

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ACTION AGR-08

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4389

INFO AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 0767

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAGR, AR

SUBJECT: MEAT INSPECTION

REF: STATE 20330

1. DEPARTMENT AND EMBASSY HAVE HAD SEVERAL EXCHANGES OF MESSAGES ON SUBJECT OF USDA/APHIS INSPECTION OF ARGENTINE MEAT PACKING PLANTS, SOME DEALING WITH SPECIFIC VISITS AND OTHERS ON SECURITY PROCEDURES. TO CLEAR UP ANY POSSIBLE CONFUSION, I WOULD LIKE TO RESTATE THIS MISSION'S POSITION ON THE OVERALL CONTINUATION OF PERIODIC INSPECTIONS.

2. IN MY OPINION, AND THAT OF MY STAFF, CONTINUED, PERIODIC INSPECTIONS ARE OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE TO U.S./ARGENTINE BILATERAL RELATIONS. EXPORTS OF ARGENTINE MEAT PRODUCTS TO THE U.S. HAVE BEEN RUNNING ABOUT \$100 MILLION A YEAR, THEY REPRESENT OVER 20 PERCENT OF ARGENTINA'S TOTAL MEAT EXPORTS AND A SIGNIFICANT PERCENTAGE OF HER HARD CURRENCY EARNINGS. THE SERIOUS REPERCUSSIONS OF ANY STEP TAKEN BY THE U.S. WHICH WOULD BLOCK OR REDUCE THESE EXPORTS ARE OBVIOUS, PARTICULARLY IN THE LIGHT OF THE CRITICAL AND DETERIORATING ECONOMIC SITUATION WHICH THE GOA FACES IN 1976.

3. I ASK THAT USDA/APHIS BE INFORMED THAT THE IMPORTANCE OF THE INSPECTION PROGRAM CLEARLY EXCEEDS POSSIBLE SECURITY RISKS THAT WOULD BE ENCOUNTERED IN PERIODIC VISITS BY INSPECTORS

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OR INSPECTION TEAMS. FOR THE PURPOSE OF FULFILLING THIS PROGRAM,

I DO NOT BELIEVE THERE SHOULD BE A LIMITATION ON TRAVEL WITHIN ARGENTINA, WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THE PERIODS SPENT HERE SHOULD BE KEPT TO THE NECESSARY MINIMUM. NEEDLESS TO SAY, THE EMBASSY, WITH THE FULL COOPERATION OF THE ARGENTINE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE AND THE FEDERAL POLICE, WILL TAKE ALL POSSIBLE STEPS TO MINIMIZE THE SECURITY RISK. IT IS ESSENTIAL, HOWEVER, THAT THE PROGRAM BE CONTINUED.

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